

# **News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending June 11, 2011**

## **Aruba – Joran Van Der Sloot's Lawyer Quits**

Maximo Altez, the Peruvian attorney representing Aruban murder suspect Joran van der Sloot, has unexpectedly quit the case, a newspaper reports.

The Dutch newspaper De Telegraaf reports that Altez said he will no longer represent van der Sloot due to ongoing disputes over the payment of bills. The newspaper also reports that van der Sloot and his attorney have been unable to agree on an appropriate defense strategy.

Van der Sloot has been charged with first-degree murder and robbery in the slaying of Peruvian business student Stephany Flores. He is also a longtime suspect in the 2005 disappearance of Natalee Holloway, a U.S. teen who went missing during a trip to Aruba.

Investigators believe Flores was killed on May 30, 2010 -- exactly five years after Holloway disappeared. The Alabama teen's body has never been found, and van der Sloot has never been charged in her disappearance. He was indicted in the United States on charges that he extorted \$25,000 from the young woman's parents.

Prosecutors said that in exchange for the money, he promised to reveal how Holloway died and the location of her body.

Van der Sloot is scheduled to appear in court next week in Peru for a pro forma hearing, during which prosecutors will present evidence in Flores' slaying. It remains unclear how this latest development will affect that schedule. (Various media)

## **Curacao/St. Maarten – Supervisory Board Central Bank Sworn-In**

Four of the six members of the Supervisory Board of Directors for the Central Bank of Curaçao and St. Maarten took the oath of office before Governor Eugene Holiday on Friday. Three of the four directors - businessman Robbie Ferron, tax consultant Marciela Illidge, and attorney Jairo Bloem – were named by St. Maarten while the fourth, attorney Nelson Navarro, was named by Curaçao.

The remaining two directors for Curaçao, attorney Glenn Camelia and Reny Maduro of the University of Curacao will take the oath in St. Maarten today, according to the Governor's Cabinet. All six directors will also have to take the oath of office before Curaçao Governor Frits Goedgedrag.

## **Aruba – Texaco First Company to Provide Bio Fuel At The Pump**

The first Bio Fuel Aruba diesel pump was put into use at the Texaco gas station of Wayaca. Owner of the new company Gregory Fungafat said that all existing diesel engines can use the fuel; it reduces emissions, and is less toxic than regular diesel.

The bio-fuel ingredient is made from used vegetable cooking oil the company collects at local hotels and restaurants.

## **Curacao – U.S. Citizen Jack Marshall Wins Curacao Tourism Industry Award**

Curacao's Hotel and Tourism Association (CHATA), has given American developer Jack Marshall its 2011 Industry Award. Marshall was given the award "for his achievement of developing the Santa Barbara area" on this Dutch Caribbean island.

Marshall has overseen the development of a 1,500-acre beach and bay front resort community, which includes the 350-room Hyatt Regency Curacao Golf Resort, Spa and Marina; the Pete Dye-designed Old Quarry golf course; the 120-slip Seru Boca Marina; and the Peter Burwash International Tennis Center. (Various media)

## **Curacao – Quiznos Opens First Franchise in Salinja**

The little Quiznos sub sandwich restaurant that began over 30 years ago in Denver, CO, now has a Curacao franchise. Quiznos International has master franchisees in nearly 25 countries and territories. Quiznos is famous throughout the world with their unique toasted sandwiches. (Various media)

## **St. Maarten – 81.347 Cruise Passengers Visit in May 2011**

St. Maarten Harbor Group of Companies had projected based on bookings that 74,488 cruise passengers would visit in May. Actual arrivals turned out to be 6,859 more than expected aboard 24 cruise ship calls. The arrivals also represented a 2.9% increase over the arrivals for May 2010 when 79,074 cruisers visited. As of May 31, the total number of cruise arrivals for the year is 897,282 (Daily Herald)

## **Aruba - Colombian Cartel Lt. Gustavo Alvarez Tellez Extradited**

Aruban authorities have extradited an alleged lieutenant of the powerful Colombian neo-paramilitary drug cartel Oficina de Envigado. Gustavo Alvarez Tellez, aka Tavo, was arrested on May 11, and was extradited by DEA to the U.S. on charges of conspiracy to traffic cocaine and money laundering.

The Oficina de Envigado cartel is held responsible for cocaine transportation to the U.S. via Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico, and for the killings of over a thousand people in Medellin, Colombia. (Various media)

## **Curacao - Isla Refinery Cat Cracker Snag**

The Venezuelan State-owned Oil Company PdVSA-operated Isla Refinery cat cracker unit, which processes 320,000 barrels of oil per day, experienced a mechanical problem over the weekend. The area downwind of the refinery was covered by a blanket of white catalyst powder.

A refinery official said the powder was harmless, however environmental groups warned residents about increased pollution which could cause respiratory problems and eye irritation. The Isla refinery faces growing complaints by residents and is involved in several lawsuits charging that its industrial emissions cause health problems ranging from chronic coughing to cancer.

The recent incident with the catalyst powder at the Isla refinery is the reason why Dutch MP Ineke van Gent of the Green Left party posed written questions to the Dutch Government. (Various media)

### **Curacao/St. Maarten – Central Bank Split Looming**

The alleged wish by St. Maarten to have its own Central Bank by January 1, 2012 opens the door for Curaçao to get its own as well. That's what Deputy PM Charles Cooper told Curaçao Parliament last week. He was reacting to questions by opposition MP Dennis Jackson, based on a letter by St. Maarten Finance Minister Hiro Shigemoto to Central Bank for Curacao and St. Maarten management. Also, a Central Bank split needs approval by Dutch authorities who demanded, as part of the Netherlands Antilles dissolution process, that Curaçao and St Maarten form a joint monetary union with one central bank and a common currency. (Various media)

### **St. Maarten – Inmates Demand Better Human Rights Conditions**

The St. Maarten Inmates Association is demanding improvement of inmates' living conditions and overall health. They refer to International Human Rights Laws for leverage and two court orders to renovate the prison at Pointe Blanche. According to Articles 7 and 10, paragraph 1, in the Human Rights Laws of the Present Covenant: "No person shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhumane treatment or punishment. All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person."

The court had ordered in 2007, 2009 and once more in February 2011 that the renovation of the Pointe Blanche prison should begin. Despite the fact that funds were received from Dutch funding agency USONA to begin renovations, inmates believe no steps have been taken to provide better living conditions. The latest February 2011 court decision is neglected and legally puts the Justice Department, in particular Justice Minister Roland Duncan, in violation of the court ruling, the inmates stated. (Daily Herald)

### **Aruba – MEP Party: Autonomy at Stake; Too Much Dutch Influence**

Aruba opposition MEP party leadership disagrees with the current AVP party policy to strengthen ties with the Netherlands and Europe. The MEP believes it gives the Dutch and Europe too much influence in Aruban internal affairs and autonomy and claim the Dutch are trying to re-colonize Aruba. The MEP has asked the Latin American parliament (Parlatino) for support.

The Venezuelan government reportedly agrees with the MEP party, because PM Mike Eman was asked by Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro to clarify the situation. Eman explained that Aruba has chosen, out of free will, to strengthen its ties with the Netherlands and Europe.

Parlatino is a regional Latin America and Caribbean organization where participating countries discuss political, economic, social and cultural developments in the region. (Various media)

## **Aruba – Dutch Fear Aruba Will Be The New Greece In The Caribbean**

Dutch Kingdom Relations Minister Piet Hein Donner said the Netherlands will not help Aruba by re-financing its astronomical debt. The Dutch government fears that Aruba will become “Greece” of the Caribbean because of its financial struggles. Aruba Finance Minister Mike de Meza stated that Aruba has its finances under control and the Dutch have no reason to worry. (Various media)

## **Curacao – Exploitation of Workers at Isla Refinery?**

A sub-contractor at the Venezuelan State-owned Oil Company PdVSA-operated Isla Refinery is exploiting Venezuelan workers, a union spokesperson said. Reportedly, the union received complaints about labor law abuse by a refinery sub-contractor. The union finds the situation unacceptable and is looking into ways to change the current situation. Also, the union wants to know why foreigners are hired instead of locals. (Extra)

## **Aruba - Van der Sloot Back in Court**

Even though a Peruvian judge postponed a preliminary hearing for Aruban Joran van der Sloot Wednesday, it still was a dramatic day in court for the father of the young woman van der Sloot is accused of killing.

The judge rescheduled the closed-door hearing -- which involves some evidence in the case -- for next Tuesday, because van der Sloot did not have legal representation in the courtroom Wednesday, Flores said. His daughter, Stephany Flores, was found dead in a Lima hotel room registered to van der Sloot in May 2010. Police say van der Sloot took money and bank cards from her wallet and fled to Chile, where he was arrested a few days later. Earlier this month, van der Sloot's defense attorney, Maximo Altez resigned, citing unspecified differences in strategy. If van der Sloot does not have an attorney next week, the judge said he would appoint one, Flores said.

The 23-year-old van der Sloot was once the prime suspect in the disappearance in Aruba of American Natalee Holloway, who vanished at age 18 while on a graduation trip. He was arrested twice but never charged in connection with her disappearance. Shortly after his 2010 arrest, a federal grand jury in Alabama indicted him on charges that he tried to extort \$250,000 from the Holloway family. Van der Sloot offered to provide what turned out to be bogus information about the whereabouts of Natalee Holloway's remains in exchange for the money, according to the indictment.

Peruvian authorities have yet to file formal charges against van der Sloot. Once the discovery phase of the case ends, prosecutors will file charges and a trial date will be set. It could be weeks before the Peruvian trial begins. Ricardo Flores said the family hoped van der Sloot would be charged with robbery and homicide, which would carry a maximum sentence of life in prison. Before resigning from the case, Altez told the media his client attacked Flores after she found something on his computer that tied him to Holloway. He gave the media a copy of a motion he filed asking that van der Sloot face a lesser charge for a crime of passion. (Various media)

## **Curacao – American Women’s Club Supports Charitable Organizations**

The American Women’s Club (AWC) gave checks to various charitable organizations at an event yesterday at the U.S. Consul General's residence, also known as Roosevelt 2

House. Siloam, Prinses Wilhelmina Fonds, Animal Rights Foundation, Autism association, Casa Cuna, Casa Manita, Shimaruku, St. Vincent de Paul, Totolika, Animal Shelter, Parke Tropical, Circus Magic, Curacao Animal Rescue, and the International Youth Foundation all received a donation. Also, AWC donated computers to the Public Library, and violin accessories to the BandaBou Music Foundation. At the check presentation ceremony, Consul General Valerie Belon expressed her appreciation for AWC's generous donations and the hard work of the beneficiary organizations. (Various media)

### **Caribbean – RBC Bank Logo Replaces RBTT Bank Logo**

Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) - Canada's largest bank - purchased RBTT of Trinidad and Tobago and its banks and branches in 10 Caribbean countries for US \$2.2 billion in 2008. RBC is now in the process replacing all RBTT logos by RBC logos in the Caribbean. (Various media)

### **St. Maarten – Former Dominican Republic President Mejia Rallying For Support**

Former Dominican Republic (DR) President and current Dominican Revolutionary Party presidential candidate Hipolito Mejia will be running for the presidency of the Dominican Republic in the May 2012, election and is pushing to gain support from DR citizens residing in St. Maarten. Renowned for his agricultural development and technological integration in the Dominican Republic, the North Carolina State University graduate will be running for a second term against Dominican Libertarian Party candidate Danilo Medina. (Daily Herald)

### **Curacao – Minister El Hakim Explores German Market**

During a meeting last week in the German capital with Air Berlin executives, Curacao's Economic Development Minister Nasser El Hakim (MFK) discussed plans for a direct air link between Germany (82 million people) and Curacao – including marketing and sales – that can be implemented immediately. "The meeting in Berlin was very successful. I am confident we will have a direct flight from Düsseldorf to Curacao in November 2011. Air Berlin is an important and reliable partner, so we are very proud of this partnership in attracting the German market," the minister said. (Various media)

### **Curacao – Minister Carlos Monk Sworn-In**

Carlos Monk is the new Curaçao Governance, Planning and Service Provision Minister after Lisa Willems-Martina turned in her resignation a few weeks ago. Sovereign Party (PS) management lost confidence in her because of alleged unethical behavior. Willems-Martina was the third PS minister, following Rene Rosalia (Education) and Norman Girigorie (predecessor of Willems-Martina), who was forced to resign since the MKF-led Schotte cabinet took office in October 2010. (Various media)

## **Kingdom – Dutch MPs Not Amused After 180° Turn PM Schotte**

Various Dutch MPs are not amused after a sudden 180° turn by Curacao PM Gerrit Schotte. The Dutch Parliament wants an explanation concerning a letter in which Schotte withdraws his support for the recent decision by the Kingdom Council of Ministers for an independent investigation into the controversy between Central Bank President Emsley Tromp and the local government.

Dutch opposition MP Martijn van Dam has asked Kingdom Relations Minister Piet Hein Donner for clarification. He would also like to know how the minister interprets the content and what consequences he foresees. In addition, Van Dam also wants to hear exactly how the request Schotte had originally made to the Kingdom Council in this matter was formulated. "The question is if the decision of the Kingdom Government still stands as a result of this letter or not. I can imagine that a new Kingdom Council meeting is called and the decision for the investigation ratified, but then without the approval of Curaçao. Another option is Higher Supervision," said Van Dam. He considers the matter urgent and asked Donner to react within 24 hours.

The spokesmen for other Dutch coalition and opposition factions also expressed their disbelief over "the turn by Schotte." Not only Tromp's integrity is at stake, but also those of Schotte and the ministers El Hakim and Jamaloodin. Van Dam added that Schotte's latest action raises the suspicion that he has something to hide. "His request to the Kingdom Council gave a signal: „Go ahead and investigate, we have nothing to hide." Schotte said that after consultation with Sovereign Party and MAN leadership, upon his return from the Netherlands, they concluded that an independent investigation as mandated by the Kingdom Council of Ministers is against the law and therefore cannot be conducted. Also, the Curacao government believes they can solve this issue without Dutch involvement. "The Central Bank Board of Commissioners and our Auditor General are competent to resolve this issue," Schotte said. (Various media)

## **St. Maarten – Perjury in Human Smuggling Case Suspected**

The St. Maarten court postponed the hearing of a Haitian man who is suspected of being involved in human smuggling. The public prosecutor is holding the Haitian businessman responsible for involvement in a December 5, 2010, operation in which approximately 30 persons from Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Dominica and Zimbabwe were given shelter in the deserted buildings of Mullet Bay Beach Resort. Later they were transported aboard the vessel "Jesu La" to St. Thomas or St. John. The ill-fated journey ended on the cliffs of Norman Island near St. Thomas, leaving eight passengers dead. Among the dead were young children.

The man is also charged with assisting a smuggling operation by two boats of 95 immigrants originating from the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Guatemala on August 14, 2010. These illegal immigrants were also transported from Mullet Bay. One of the boats arrived in St. John, while the other was intercepted near Tortola. He was further charged with organizing several attempted smuggling operations between July 1 and December 5, 2010, as well as with membership of a criminal organization. (Daily Herald)

## **CURAÇAO**

### ***Crime June 3 – 9***

On June 3, a home owner in Marie Pompoen was robbed upon arrival at home. The victim was shot and injured during a struggle. There were five robberies on June 9. A café in Pietermaai was robbed by two men. One client was shot and injured during a struggle. The suspects were later arrested by police. A pedestrian returning to Hotel Holland near Hato International Airport was robbed by three vehicle occupants. In Saliña, three men held up a security guard, smashed the window of a clothing store and stole various items. A jewelry store near the Renaissance Hotel in Otrobanda was robbed by two men on a scooter. The suspects escaped with a large number of wristwatches and other jewelry. Around noon, a snackbar in Seru Fortuna was robbed. The female owner was beaten. (Various newspapers)

## **ARUBA**

### ***Crime June 3 – 9***

On June 3, a Valero gas station in San Nicolas was robbed. On June 7, a grocery store in Brazil was robbed. (Diario Aruba, Amigoe)

### ***Security cameras to be installed***

Areas of Palm Beach and the shopping streets of Oranjestad and San Nicolas are to be equipped with permanent camera monitoring in 2012. Minister of Justice Arthur Dowers (AVP) established a project group consisting of the Aruba Police Department and representatives of the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Department of Public Works (DOW) and of his own office to study the possibilities and make recommendations. Chief of Police Dolfi Richardson said that the final plan should be ready in September or October of this year. The project will be financed through the Aruba Government, the Aruba Development Fund FDA, and the Aruba Hospitality & Security Foundation (AH&SF). There is also some interest from the private sector so the project could turn into a public/private partnership. (Daily Herald)

## **ST. MAARTEN**

### ***Crime June 3 – 9***

Police reported two armed robberies on June 9. A supermarket in Cole Bay and a money courier for a lottery ticket selling business in Ebenezer were robbed. (Daily Herald, St. Maarten Island Time)

## BONAIRE

### ***Crime June 3 – 9***

On June 5, a man was shot and killed in Kralendijk.

#### ***Suspects held in shooting case***

Police have arrested a second suspect in connection with the June 5 shooting of a Peruvian man, after the principal suspect had already given himself up. The fatal incident at an apartment in Kralendijk was related to a fight the night before in another apartment, during which another man was seriously injured. It appears the Peruvian was shot dead, while his brother also suffered several gunshot wounds when he tried to defend the victim. (Daily Herald)

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*"The Weekly Press Summary is a compilation of stories running in the Dutch Caribbean press that is intended to alert readers about items of interest to them. There is no interpretation or verification of the facts contained therein."*